



How Imām al-Ash’arī Left the Mu’tazilah to Join Ahl al-Sunnah¹ *Ibn ‘Asākir*

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Imām al-Ash’arī says: During the first ten days of one Ramaḍān, I saw RasūlAllāh ﷺ. He said: “O ‘Alī, aid the *madh’habs* that are veritably reported by me, because only that is the Truth.” I woke up and was perplexed about this grave matter. I was immensely worried about this because I had numerous proofs opposing the ‘reported’ belief.

Within the next ten days, I saw him again ﷺ. “What did you do about that which I ordered you to do?” I said: “Yā RasūlAllāh, I tried to do it but I have many strong proofs [and arguments] against those beliefs which are reported from you. Therefore, I follow that which has stronger proofs concerning [the Attributes] of Allāh ta’ālā” He said: “Aid the *madh’habs* that are reported from me, because that is the truth”

I woke up and I was terribly saddened. I then forsook *Kalām* [theology] and began following the ḥadīth and reciting the Qur’ān.

In Basrah we have a custom that reciters (*qurrā’a*) assemble together on the twenty seventh night of Ramaḍān and finish the entire Qur’ān in that night. But I was feeling very sleepy and I couldn’t stay back any longer. So I went home and slept, feeling very sorry at the great loss of missing that night’s *khatm*.

I saw RasūlAllāh ﷺ “What did you do about that which I told you?” I replied: “I have forsaken *Kalām* and taken a firm hold of the Book of Allāh and your *sunnah*.” He said: “I did not tell you to forsake *Kalām*. I told you to aid the *madh’hab* that is reported from me, because that is the truth.”

¹ Extracted from Ibn ‘Asākir’s: *Tabyīn Kadhib al-Muftarī fīmā Nusiba ila al-Imām Abu’l Ḥasan al-Ash’arī* [Exposing the maligner’s lies, in those things falsely attributed to Imām Abu’l Ḥasan al-Ash’arī], pgs 51-52.

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I said: “Yā RasūlAllāh, how can I shun those ideas which I have helped in strengthening myself and aided its cause for the past thirty years, on the basis of a dream?”

He said: “If I did not know that Allāh will aid you [in this], I would not have come here to explain all this. Do not make light of this dream in which I have come. Is that in which I saw Gibrīl, just another dream? I will not come again to you. Do well and Allāh will aid you.”

I woke up and said to myself: only falsehood remains after truth has been manifest. So I began to advocate ḥadīth about seeing Allāh, intercession etc. And I have found proofs – by Allāh - which I have never heard before, nor read in a book. This, I have realized to be the aid from Allāh, the good news of which was given to me by RasūlAllāh ﷺ.

